

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINTUES

April 13th, 2021

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday April 13th, 2021 at 7:00pm.

Commission Members: Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Phil Lasker, Scott Walker, and Associate Members Sarah Carrier & Scott Lever were present. Program Supervisor Zachary Vaillette was also in attendance. Recreation Director Joe Connelly and Commission Member Shirley Canniff were not in attendance.

Anticipated Speakers: Daniel Amstutz, Wendy Johnnecheck, Ali Carter, Alan Jones, Lily Chung

Members of the Public: Joy Ahern, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Evelyn Ginsparg, Cristin Canterbury Bagnall

Preliminary Matter: Leslie Mayer, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call. Ms. Mayer read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Ms. Mayer.

Open Forum – Public Comment

N/A

Correspondence Received

N/A

Bike Rack Placement Recommendations – Daniel Amstutz

Daniel Amstutz, Senior Transportation Planner for the Town of Arlington was present to discuss possible placement locations for bike racks in Town parks. Changes are being made to the Town Bylaws regarding the bike parking, with required bike parking in new developments. The Department of Planning and Community Development has requested \$25,000 in FY22 for additional bike parking in Town. It was also noted that this department's Bike Parking policy can be viewed on the Town website. With the funding request, Mr. Amstutz and his counterparts are beginning to look at possible placement locations for new bike racks. The Arlington Bike Advisory Committee did work several years ago to identify Town owned properties in need of more bicycle parking. Some parks currently do not have ideal bike parking locations. Based off these identified locations by the Advisory Committee, Mr. Amstutz stated that recommended locations for new bike racks include Hill's Hill, Buzzell Field, Magnolia Park, and outside the Ed Burns Arena. These are areas directly off the bike path in Town. It is estimated that the funding will cover costs to install a total of (30) bike parking locations in Town. Biking fits in with the sustainability goals of Arlington and additional parking locations will help reduce impact on trees, fences, and benches. Outlined below are summaries and feedback for each placement location discussed:

Hill's Hill

Suggested placement location for (8-10) bike racks is near the outfield fence, next to the Hill's Hill playground and playing field. There is no existing concrete pad in the suggested location. A suggestion was made to inquire about a pad placement with current contractor working on Hills Hill ADA project. Concerns regarding this location were shared as this could be a high traffic area with individuals going to and from the playground.

Buzzell Field

Suggested placement location on existing pavement located next to onsite playground. No major issues or concerns regarding this proposed location.

Magnolia Park

Suggested placement location of (3) bike racks on existing pavement located next to onsite community garden. It was noted that this pavement was added for the placement of a picnic table, which is a local Boy Scout's Eagle Project. The status of this picnic table project is up in the air and this will be checked in on. If so, this location cannot be used for bike rack placement. Ms. Rothenberg stated she is looking for a placement to be made closer to the entrance to the park, a more safe and central location. Mr. Lasker likes the idea of a bike rack adjacent the existing pad near the community garden. More information on status of existing pad and planned table will be acquired.

Ed Burns Arena

Multiple possible placement locations were suggested at the Ed Burns Arena. This included by the recreation office, on the sidewalk near the corner of the building closest to the parking lot entrance, and a parking space near the Summer Street Field and parking lot entrance. Concerns regarding the location next to the office and in the parking lot were shared. It was noted that work to the parking lot may occur in the future. Ryder Street is a right of way and there are concerns about losing parking for events at the rink and field.

Mr. Lever asked if lighting of the bike racks at these locations was considered. Mr. Amstutz stated this was not considered. Ms. Mayer asked about funding and installation. Mr. Amstutz reported the \$25,000 in funding can go toward supplies, materials, and installation. The funding can be encumbered if needed. Mr. Amstutz has not reached out but was anticipating the DPW to take the lead on the installations.

Mr. Amstutz will gather more information on materials and the plan for installation. He will contact Mr. Connelly to discuss these possible placement locations in further detail. The Commission is in support of this overall plan, as the addition of new bike racks will be an improvement to these recreational spaces. Further information on the specific plan, timeline, and placement locations will be discussed in a future meeting.

Friends of Crusher Lot Clean-Up Request & Signage Request – Alan Jones

Alan Jones and Lily Chung were present on behalf of the Friends of Crusher Lot group. This was to speak on (2) requests. The first request was the proposal for a general cleanup event at Crusher Lot on April 24th. Ms. Chung stated the group held a cleanup in the fall which was successful. They are looking to do this again. In summary, items specifically related to the cleanup event included questions regarding maintenance/raking of existing trails on site. This was in addition to the removal of a memorial in a clearing that has been onsite for almost two years. It was noted that a Commissioner has a connection to the family and that the Commission will take the lead on this matter. A plan is being discussed and this will be communicated with the friends. Specifics also discussed regarding the cleanup were the removal of invasive species, work occurring on a ditch area that may be hazardous to users, and previously built unauthorized trails/features/etc. Commission members recently conducted a walkthrough of several parks in Town, including the Crusher Lot. There are numerous parks in Town that have features that were not approved. Examples of this include teepees in the woods. The Commission believes that they need to be consistent with their policies and actions. While these unauthorized alterations occurred, they would need to look at the removal of these from all parks if they were going to approve any removal work at Crusher. The features referred to were built before discussions began around mountain biking in 2020. Mr. Walker suggested using the cleanup day to inventory current conditions, trails, and features. This information will serve helpful in the future, if new hazards or unauthorized features are identified in the park. Any new unauthorized trails or features in Town parks, including Crusher, should be reported to Recreation. Going back to the general cleanup request, Ms. Mayer stated all COVID protocols must be followed. Overall, Commissioners were in support of the cleanup as discussed.

The other item discussed was the request for permanent rule signage at Crusher Lot. Friends of Crusher Lot, like abutter Joy Ahern, have been hanging paper copies of signage approved by the department. This signage outlines general Bylaws for parks. The Friends of Crusher is requesting for permanent signage to be installed at two entrances to the property.

The Commission is not in support of installing permanent signage at Crusher Lot at this time. Similar to the removal of unauthorized previously existing features, there needs to be consistency across the board. If new signage is to be added at Crusher, then the Commission would need to discuss this for all Town properties. One concern shared was that signage could be uninviting to users. Ms. Mayer noted her preference to ensure that any permanent signage is welcoming. It was stated that parks should be inviting and permanent rules only signage could send the wrong message.

At this time, Ms. Rothenberg made the motion to approve the Friends of Crusher Lot Clean Up event at the property on April 24th. This motion includes that all COVID protocols must be followed and that final details must be discussed with Mr. Connelly. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker. The motion to approve this event was approved by the Commission, 4-0, at 8:20pm. The request for permanent signage was not included in this approval.

Orienteering Event – Menotomy 5/13 – Wendy Johnchek

Wendy Johnchek of New England Orienteering Club was present to speak on an event request at Menotomy Rocks Park on 5/13. Ms. Johnchek discussed details on the proposed event. The group is currently working with other Recreation Departments and has recently held events in Lexington and Newton. So far, events have gone well and she is confident they can host a successful and covid compliant event here in Arlington. This comes following the success of the event held at Menotomy by the group last fall. There are numerous residents in Town that are a part of this group. The proposed event would be self-guided through the property. Preregistration would be required. All participants would need to sign a COVID waiver. Ms. Mayer noted that participants will need to be limited since it is a one day event. Commissioners shared their feedback and were in support of this. The only question was regarding if the group has insurance, which was confirmed.

At this time, Mr. Lasker made the motion to approve the New England Orienteering Club event at Menotomy Rocks Park on May 13th. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker. The motion to approve this event was approved by the Commission, 4-0, at 8:26pm.

Outdoor Performances in Our Parks – Ali Carter & Jenny Raitt, Planning and Community Development

Ali Carter was present to speak on this matter. Ms. Carter thanked the Commission for all their support of local businesses over the last year. She comes to Commission with a request similar to the Business in the Parks program. Local performing groups have been very limited and restricted by COVID. The traditionally held Porch Fest event will not be held this year. With that, they are looking for ways to recover and continue to perform. This request has two parts. One section regarding the use of sidewalks for performers will be separate and go directly to the Select Board.

Ms. Carter stated that she was present to discuss the possibility of small outdoor performances by vendors in Town parks. This was specifically at Spy Pond (events up to 25 guests) and Robbins Farm Park (events up to 50 guests). All events would be scheduled and approved ahead of time. No food or drink would be allowed. All performers would be required to wear masks at all times, which does not allow for vocalists or horns. Ms. Carter shared feedback on a consumer survey in Town regarding residents' concerns regarding COVID and attending indoor/outdoor events. Other details were also discussed. Commissioners shared their feedback on this proposal. Overall, there were general concerns. Concerns discussed were the management of the actual events (entrance, exit, etc.). While tickets/registration would be required, there is no current plan in place on who will manage this the day of, ultimately falling back on the performer. Specifically at Robbins, the area is very open and it would be hard to create a space away from the general public. Ms. Carter stated that she believes that she could work with Recreation and the DPW on how to set up these events. Questions regarding if these events would be for profit came up. Ms. Carter stated some would be and some would not be. Conversations continued around the idea. While Commissioners were not opposed, overall there were shared concerns regarding logistics and social distancing. With this, the idea of looking at possible alternative locations was suggested. It is believed that Spy Pond and Robbins Farm are just set up in a way which makes it difficult to be successful.

Ms. Carter thanked the Commission. She plans to discuss this idea and alternative locations with Mr. Connelly and will report back to the Commission. Ms. Mayer reiterated that the Commission is not opposed and wants this to work. More detail is needed though. Ms. Mayer thanked Ms. Carter for her work and stated that she should not be discouraged.

Capital Projects Update

Reservoir Phase II Building Project – Scott Walker

Mr. Walker reported that the building work is moving along. Mr. Connelly and he have been meeting regularly with contractors. Currently, plumbing work is taking place. While the contractor is currently 1-2 weeks behind schedule, there are no concerns that this timeline will have an impact on the pathway project or the beach season.

Reservoir Phase II Site Work Project – Leslie Meyer

Ms. Mayer reported that the new pump system installed in Phase I of the Reservoir Project will be tested tomorrow. While a preliminary test occurred in the fall, this will be a full test of the system. Water levels inside the swimming area have been raised in order for this to occur. Ms. Mayer stated that the goal would be to bring water levels back down until the beach is open however, the DPW does not believe this will be feasible. An alternative plan is being proposed by the contractor. Ms. Mayer also stated that the plan for Phase II site work is going well. The concession stand building will need an occupancy permit in the future. In the coming weeks, erosion control work will begin and the outdated playground will be removed. Work on the pathway around the Reservoir will occur while the beach is open. Ms. Mayer also noted that discussions with

the Town of Lexington are occurring regarding the possible use of Rindge Park as an access point for the project's contractor.

Wellington Park – Jen Rothenberg

Ms. Rothenberg provided a brief update on the ongoing Wellington Park Project. Ms. Rothenberg stated that the bid for landscaping came in under budget and has been awarded to Cassidy Landscaping. After review of the project budget by Domenic Lanzillotti of Purchasing, discussions around reducing plantings and the size of the playground will occur. This comes as the contingency amount for the project is believed to be too low.

Recreation and Rink Updates

Program Supervisor Zach Vaillette provided this update. The ice surface at the Ed Burns Arena has been removed for the summer. As usual, all skating activities at the rink will resume in August when the ice is reinstalled. Spring programs have begun, with numerous spring program sections beginning over the next several weeks. One program highlighted was the department's internally run Pickleball Program at Robbins Farm, which is being offered (2) days a week. Mr. Vaillette reported that most internally run summer camp programs are already sold out. The department continues to plan for summer programs, with the summer hiring process wrapping up over the next several weeks.

Approval of Minutes – 3/22/21 & 3/31/21

The approval of the Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes for their March 22nd meeting and March 31st park walk through were both discussed. Several edits discussed regarding the 3/22/21 Meeting Minutes were as follows:

Open Comment – Discussed the rewording of a statement made by Elena Bartholomew during Public Comment. This was in regards to an overflowing trash barrel at Robbins Farm Park.

North Union Tree Planting – Confusion regarding the wording. Removing statement regarding trees being previously removed from the property as this was not completely accurate. The previous planting was in an effort to offset the trees removed from the adjacent school property during its construction.

Reservoir Phase II – Discussed the removal of the statement referring to the rubberized surfacing material for the walking path around the Arlington Reservoir.

The motion to approve the Park and Recreation Commission March 22nd Meeting Minutes, as amended, was made by Mr. Lasker. This motion was seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. The Commission voted to approve the March 22nd Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes as amended, with a vote of 4-0, at 9:12pm.

The motion to approve the Park and Recreation Commission March 31st Meeting Minutes from their site walkthrough, as amended, was made by Mr. Walker. This motion was seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. The Commission voted to approve the March 31st, 2021 Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes as amended, with a vote of 3-0, at 9:14pm. Ms. Mayer abstained from this vote as she was not present at this meeting.

Comments and Items for Future Meetings

- a. Lauren Jaeger, Thorndike Wild Flowers – 4/27/21
- b. Adrienne Landry, Plantings at Spy Pond – 4/27/21
- c. Continued Off Leash Dog Issues
- d. Carry In Carry Out Park Policy

Other

Mr. Walker made the motion to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Lasker. Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved by Commissioners, 4-0, at 9:25pm. The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Program Supervisor, Zachary Vaillette.

